

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 01542 110050Z

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8761

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES - "WARDS OF THE NATION"

REF: STATE 048514

SUMMARY: TWO OF THE "WARDS," MAI ANH VIET AND LA NGOC LUYEN, HAVE RECENTLY BEEN INTERVIEWED TO ACQUIRE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED IN STATE 048514. THE EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS SECTION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS ALSO QUERIED CONCERNING THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. DETAILS FOLLOW: END SUMMARY

1. AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ROC AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WAS REACHED IN EARLY 1974 FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRAINING PROGRAM AT THE TAIWAN SUGAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE. THE ROC ORIGINALLY OFFERED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TWENTY VIETNAMESE YOUTHS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM WITH ALL EXPENSES TO BE PAID BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA. SELECTION OF QUALIFIED STUDENTS WAS LEFT ENTIRELY TO THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT. THE PERIOD OF STUDY WAS SCHEDULED FOR 18 MONTHS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE STUDENTS WOULD RETURN TO VIETNAM AFTER COMPLETION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM.

2. THE PROGRAM FINALLY GOT OFF THE GROUND WHEN THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT SUBMITTED TWENTY-THREE NAMES TO THE ROC FOR CONSIDERATION. IT WAS THE DECISION OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT THAT THE STUDENTS ALL BE ORPHANS(FATHERS KILLED BY COMMUNIST FORCES) AND IN THEIR LATE TEENS TO EARLY TWENTIES. ALTHOUGH THE ROC ORIGINALLY ONLY OFFERED TWENTY

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PAGE 02 TAIPEI 01542 110050Z

SCHOLARSHIPS, THE TWENTY-THREE NAMES SUBMITTED WERE ACCEPTED

AND ON NOVEMBER 19, 1974, THE STUDENTS ARRIVED IN TAIWAN TO BEGIN THEIR TRAINING WITH THE TAIWAN SUGAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

3. WITH THE FALL OF VIETNAM TO COMMUNIST HANDS IN LATE APRIL, IT BECAME EVIDENT TO THE STUDENTS AS WELL AS TO THE OFFICIALS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT THE BOYS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN TO VIETNAM AFTER COMPLETION OF THEIR COURSE OF STUDY. ROC OFFICIALS IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO INVESTIGATE EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES FOR THE STUDENTS IN TAIWAN.

4. THE TRAINING PROGRAM TERMINATED ON JULY 5, 1975 AND ON AUGUST 8, 1975 THE STUDENTS WERE ISSUED CERTIFICATES OF SATISFACTORY COMPLETION AND MENIAL JOBS WERE FOUND FOR THEM IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. SINCE MOST OF THE JOBS INVOLVED LITTLE OR NO SKILL AND LOTS OF HARD WORK, THE STUDENTS BECAME QUITE DISGRUNTLED. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS UNABLE TO LOCATE BETTER EMPLOYMENT FOR THE BOYS BECAUSE NONE OF THEM HAD ACHIEVED ANY PROFICIENCY IN CHINESE (THEIR TRAINING WAS CONDUCTED THROUGH AN INTERPRETER) AND THEREFORE COULD NOT QUALIFY FOR DECENT PAYING JOBS. ASIDE FROM HELP-ING WITH EMPLOYMENT, NO OTHER ASSISTANCE, MONETARY OR OTHERWISE, HAS BEEN PROVIDED SINCE THE TRAINING PROGRAM FINISHED.

5. AT PRESENT THERE ARE NINETEEN OF THESE "WARDS" STILL RESIDING IN VARIOUS PARTS OF TAIWAN. FOUR HAVE RECEIVED PAROLES INTO THE UNITED STATES (SUN VAN PHUC; TRAN NGOC LAN; DONG SI HINH AND LE TINH KIEN) ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS TO JOIN RELATIVES. EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED THAT EACH BOY SUBMIT BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CONCERNING RELATIVES IN U.S., IF ANY, AND WHEREABOUTS OF OTHER RELATIVES. SINCE THEY ARE LIVING THROUGHOUT TAIWAN, TRYING TO SURVIVE IN (FOR THEM) A FOREIGN CULTURE, IT MAY TAKE SOME TIME TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY INFO FROM THEM ALL.

6. THE CHIEF OF THE EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AFTER PROVIDING THE REQUESTED INFORMATION CONCERNING THE "WARDS PROGRAM," SOLICITED THE EMBASSY'S HELP IN RESETTLING THESE BOYS. HE EXPRESSED THE ROC'S DESIRE TO ASSIST THESE DISPLACED STUDENTS, BUT STATES THAT THE MINISTRY NOW BELIEVES ALL EFFORTS ON THEIR PART HAVE FAILED AND THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TAIPEI 01542 110050Z

RESETTLEMENT IN THE U.S. MIGHT BE THE ANSWER TO THE PLIGHT OF THESE ISOLATED "WARDS OF THE NATION."

7. EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE INDIVIDUAL BIO INFO ON REMAINING NINETEEN "WARDS" ONCE THEY HAVE ALL BEEN CONTACTED.
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